

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7326

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13612

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: EFIN, PINR, TH

SUBJ: REQUEST FOR BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

REF: STATE 160502

1. CHALONG PUNGRAKUN RESIGNED AS DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF THE BANK OF THAILAND IN MARCH BECAUSE OF ACCUSATIONS MADE AGAINST HIM ON THE AWARD OF CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW HEADQUARTERS FOR THE CNETRAL BANK. HE IS NOW ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED KRUNG THAI BANGK. BANK OF THAILAND SOURCES TELL US HE WILL NOT BE GOING TO THE IMF MEETING.

2. ASSUMING YOUR REQUEST IS FOR BIO DATA ON PRINCIPAL STAFF MEMBER ATTENDING THE IBRD/IMF MEETING, WE HAVE ASCERTAINED THAT THE RANKING MEMBER OF THE BANK OF THAILAND STAFF ACCOMPANYING DR. SANO UNAKUN IN AUGUST WILL BE DR. THAWIN KHUTRAKUN, ASSISTANT TO THE GOVERNOR, WITH SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOREIGN EXCHANGE OPERATIONS. THAWIN IS RUMORED TO BE LEADING CANDIDATE FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR THE IBRD/IMF WHEN THAILAND'S TURN COMES UP TO REPRESENT ITS GROUPING IN THE INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

3. DR. THAWIN WAS BORN IN 1916 AND DID ADVANCED STUDY IN SWITZERLAND AND GERMANY IN THE LATE 1930'S. HE WAS IN BERLIN WHEN THE WAR BROKE OUT IN THE FAR EAST IN 1941 AND SPENT THE YEARS 1942-1947 AS THIRD SECRETARY IN THE THAI
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EMBASSIES AT BERN, STOCKHOLM AND MOSCOW. HE RETURNED TO

THAILAND IN 1947 AND JOINED THE BANK OF THAILAND IN 1950.
DR. THAWIN'S ENGLISH IS COMPETENT BUT NOT FLUENT. REPORTEDLY,
HIS FRENCH AND GERMAN ARE BETTER.

4. FOR MANY YEARS, HE WAS DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF
FOREIGN BANGKONG AND AMERICAN BANKERS WHO DEALT WITH HIM
HOLD HIM IN HIGH ESTEEM. ONLY EMBASSY CONTACT WITH HIM IN
RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN ON PROBLEMS OF MILITARY FINANCE
FACILITIES WHERE HE HAS BEEN VERY HELPFUL.

5. HE SHARES THE CONSERVATIVE FINANCIAL IDEAS OF OTHER
LONG-TIME BANK OF THAILAND OFFICIALS. WHILE HE IS PERSONALLY
FAVORABLE TO WESTERN APPROACHES TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCE,
WE EXPECT THAT THAI POLICIES IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL
INSTITUTIONS WILL INCREASINGLY FOLLOW THE THIRD WORLD LINE,
ESPECIALLY IF ASEAN PARTNERS TAKE THAT APPROACH.
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